Trudeau adds seven fresh faces to Liberals' inner circle of power

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Body

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau unveiled a slightly bigger cabinet for his minority government on Wednesday, featuring faces new to both the inner circle of power and to politics in general.

Anita Anand,

Minister of Public Services and Procurement

Born in Nova Scotia, Anand is described on her Liberal party website as a scholar, lawyer and mother of four who has lived in Ontario for almost 35 years. She was first elected this fall in Oakville and is now on leave as a law professor at the University of Toronto, where she has taught since 2006 and most recently held a chair position in "investor protection and corporate governance."

Anand takes over a portfolio that oversees billions of dollars in public spending, including the purchase of military hardware. She will also assume responsibility for Phoenix, the computerized pay system that has disrupted compensation for thousands of federal civil servants.

Mona Fortier,

Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance

Fortier was first elected in a 2017 byelection in the Ottawa riding of Vanier, a perennial Liberal stronghold, and was the co-chair of the Liberal party's national election platform committee this year. Her website says she is a mother of three who was a strategic communications consultant before she entered politics.

In her new role, she will work with Finance Minister Bill Morneau at a time of recurring deficits, economic uncertainty in the face of trade tensions between the United States and China and worries about a troubled oil sector. She will also take on the new portfolio of minister of middle-class prosperity. The Liberals have tried to position themselves as champions of the middle class, a vaguely defined swath of Canadians on whose behalf the party has said it will govern.

Steven Guilbeault, Minister

of Canadian Heritage

A longtime environmental activist with a high profile in Quebec, the co-founder of the organization Équiterre brings decades of experience as a campaigner for climate action to the Trudeau cabinet. Elected in the Montreal riding of Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Guilbeault has not been shy about his opposition to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion,

which puts him at odds with the government he is joining. In their last mandate, the Liberals twice approved the project over opposition from Indigenous people and environmentalists and bought the existing pipeline to save the expansion from being dropped by its former owners.

Guilbeault will be responsible for the federal government's role in supporting and regulating Canada's creative and cultural industries, including broadcasting and other media. He will also shepherd in a new three per cent income tax on large global tech giants like Facebook and Google, which the Liberals promised during the election campaign. The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated - albeit with "high uncertainty - that the new tax could reap $540 million in the 2020-21 fiscal year alone.

Marco Mendicino,

Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

The MP for Eglinton-Lawrence makes the jump to cabinet after serving as parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities and parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General and chair of the Liberal caucus. First elected in 2015, Mendicino was a Crown attorney for 10 years. According to his website biography, he prosecuted organized crime and terrorism cases, including the high-profile "Toronto 18" case.

He takes over as immigration minister from Toronto MP Ahmed Hussen as the government continues to deal with the influx of irregular migrants crossing from the U.S., most prominently in Quebec. He will also oversee a planned increase in immigrants, from 331,00 this year to 350,000 in 2021.

Marc Miller, Minister

of Indigenous Services

Miller, a lawyer and close friend to Trudeau, was first elected in his downtown Montreal riding in 2015. Miller previously served as the parliamentary secretary for Crown-Indigenous relations, and learned Mohawk to deliver a speech in the House of Commons in February. Miller will be tasked with improving services to Indigenous communities, helping them move toward self-government, improving on-reserve education and housing, and ending all long-term boil-water advisories by 2021.

Debra Schulte,

Minister of Seniors

Deb Schulte is a former York Region councillor who first won her seat in King-Vaughan in 2015 by a margin of fewer than 2,000 votes over the Conservative incumbent. Schulte holds a mechanical and aerospace engineering degree from Princeton University and worked at Bombardier Aerospace for two decades before entering politics. She also boasts green credibility, having served on various environmental organizations and foundations.

She takes over from Filomena Tassi, who was promoted to minister of labour. Schulte will be responsible for working on income insecurity issues facing seniors, improving access to affordable housing, promoting health initiatives and fostering "social inclusion and engagement."

Dan Vandal, Minister

of Northern Affairs

The MP for Saint Boniface-Saint Vital is now one of the few Prairie voices at Trudeau's cabinet table. A five-term Winnipeg city councillor, Vandal served as deputy mayor and the chair of the city's protection, property and public works committee.

As Northern Affairs minister, Vandal will oversee a portfolio that has been resurrected after being dissolved when Trudeau created the Crown-Indigenous Affairs and Indigenous Services ministries. The Liberal government's Arctic Policy Framework identifies improving energy, transportation and communications infrastructure, creating jobs, and dealing with the effects of climate change in Canada's North.

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